

BUCHAN ISLAND FOR SALE

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By JOHN WILLIAMS

A SCOTTISH island which featured in novels by Virginia Woolf and John Buchan is expected to fetch only £75,000 when it goes under the hammer next Thursday.

Complete with a three-bedroomed house, guest cottage, swimming pool and sauna, the island, Eileen Ban (White Island) off Skye, covers eight-and-a-half acres.

It has its own water supply pumped automatically from a well and a generator provides electricity and power for the sauna.

The auctioneers, Harman Heavley, who are offering the island for an anonymous vendor at a London sale, describe it as the "ultimate Scottish island." But they say the estimated price is realistic.

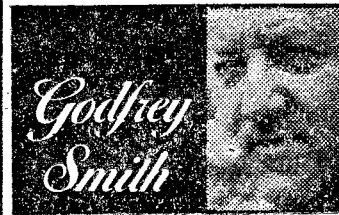
The author and naturalist Gavin Maxwell owned the island from 1963 until his death in 1969 and Virginia Woolf wrote about it in "To The Lighthouse" as did John Buchan in "The Prince in Captivity."

The purchaser will have as a near-neighbour a 70ft-high automatic lighthouse on a rock 50ft away from the island.

Why not prince regent?

■ The Prince of Wales launched an ambitious expedition called Operation Raleigh last week. It involves forty separate expeditions and four thousand people. Fine: but at 35 the prince necessarily treads the lower foothills of statecraft. He should become prince regent in two years' time when the Queen is sixty, thus avoiding a re-run of Edward VII's tedious half-century wait in the wings.

My next proposal is, I suspect, much more controversial. When the time eventually comes, I think Charles should decline the title of king. When a quarter of the globe was painted red, it made sense to have a king emperor: but for our little province in north-west Europe to go into the 21st century as a kingdom seems to me out of scale. Let us continue to live instead under the informal and slightly raffish aegis of a regency.



■ In an ugly week I found an old Buchan thriller the best escapist reading. He thought the civilised world was coming apart, but at least gave us good old Richard Hannay to slug it out with England's enemies. Yet no modern writer would get away with the coarse anti-semitism which disfigures his work. In *The Three Hostages* it's quite funny. Julius Victor is one of the richest men in the world: "Blenkiron, who didn't like his race, had once described him to me as the whitest Jew since St Paul."

Orwell said the only great English writer who had taken a distinctly pro-Jewish stand was Dickens (thus forgetting George Eliot and *Daniel Deronda*). He detected traces of anti-semitism in Shaw, Wells, and Huxley, and did not even bother to name notorious anti-semites like Chesterton, Belloc, Buchan and the appalling Sapper. Still, he concluded, no serious English writer had stooped to it since the mid-Thirties and the rise of Hitler. True; and I suspect that we'd pass Paul Johnson's ingenious test. Intellectual life, he declared, could not flourish in any country where the Jews felt even slightly uncomfortable. As *The Good Jews' Guide* might say more reports, please.